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ABSTRACT

This book is designed for use by parents at home to help them encourage the development of necessary skills in their preschool-age children through play and other daily living experiences. The activities are presented as a series of short paragraphs written in the first person from the child's perspective with a box that the child can check when he or she accomplishes the task described. The experiences are intended to strengthen the use of the child's five senses, enhance the acquisition of language and prereading skills, provide opportunities for conceptual growth through reasoning and independent observation, and encourage social growth and development. Specific activities take advantage of routine household chores such as grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning as well as outside play and visits to community facilities (e.g., parks, schools, fire stations) as potential learning opportunities. The three sections group the activities by those occurring inside the house, those immediately outside the house, and those in the neighborhood. A section at the end of the book reviews each of the skill areas that are important to a young child's growth in terms of how the skills are acquired and how they contribute to later development. (VW).

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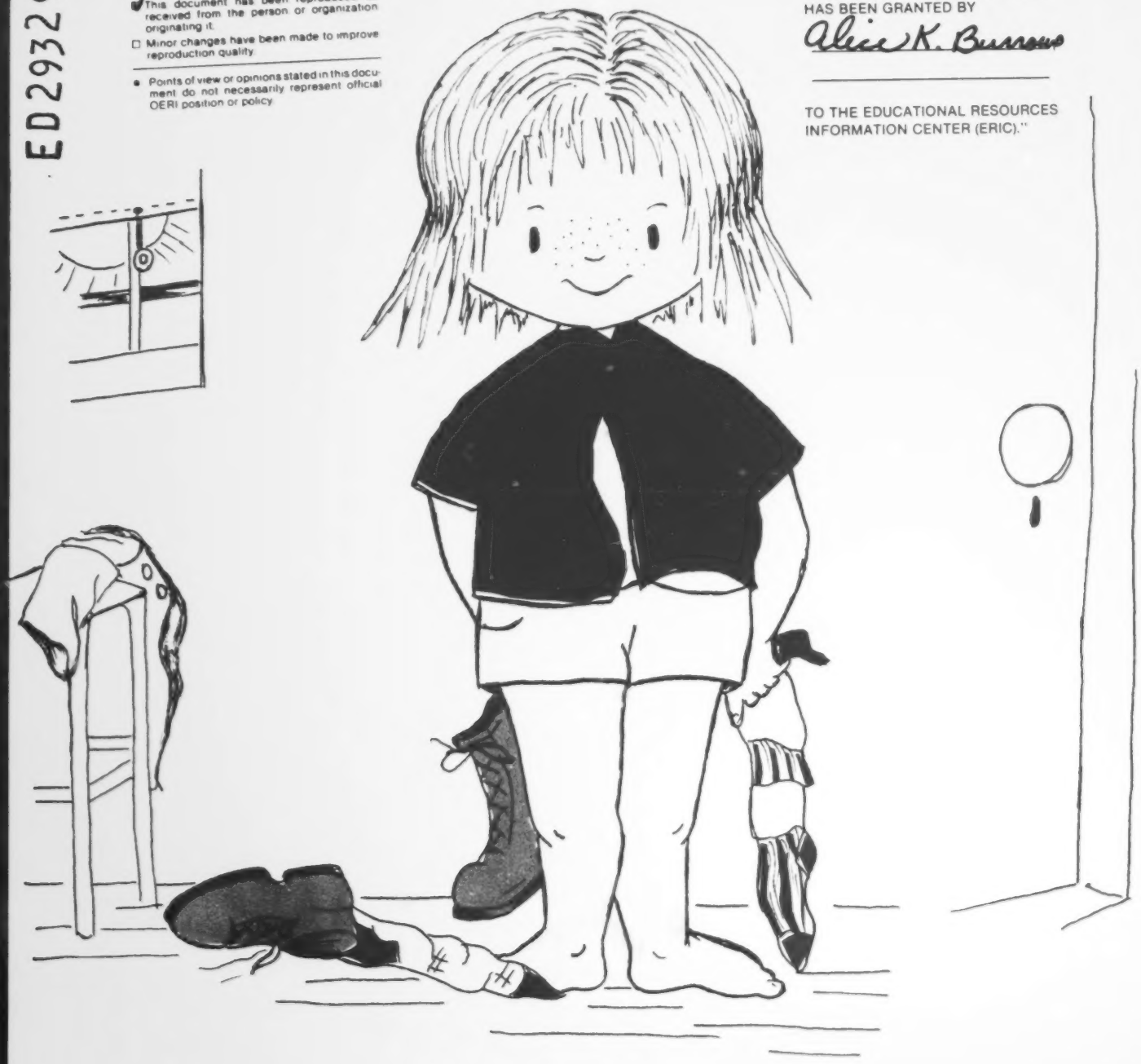

I CAN DO IT

EC202492

I CAN DO IT

by

PROJECT ENLIGHTENMENT
RALEIGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Elise D. Coley, Editor and Illustrator

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Raleigh, North Carolina

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INTRODUCTION

Project Enlightenment Presents:

– a book about things you can do with your child to help him learn and grow. Its purpose is to help get your child excited about learning and about some of the things he can do. A child who is excited about learning and who feels good about what he can do is really ready to enjoy more experiences and meet new challenges.

Your child can share this book with you in many ways. Let him put a check in the boxes on the following pages when he is able to say, "I can do that." Let him make up his own special idea for each page. He may want to add more color to the pictures or draw himself doing something he feels especially good about being able to do. Most of all, let these pages emphasize the need to do and say and experience in order to grow.

INSIDE

I CAN

☐ . . . . . find for you a container that measures 1 cup or ½ cup or ¼ cup, or I can find the tablespoon and teaspoon too. I can even measure some things for you. Sometimes they will run out of the cup, but I can clean that up myself. I like being responsible for the things that I do. If I start with measuring dry things like rice or grits first, I will be more successful.

☐ . . . . . help you put the groceries away and tell you about the colors on the labels and the different kinds of foods. I can put the foods that need to be kept cold together and separate the other things according to where you keep them or how they're used.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . tell you about how different things that I am putting away smell. I can close my eyes and tell you just by smelling a banana, or bacon, or even the soap that you use to wash dishes.

☐ . . . . . close my eyes again and guess an apple or an egg and a lot of other things just by touching and feeling them. I can tell you if they are smooth or rough, hard or soft, round or square, and much more. It makes me feel happy to guess right.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . tell you when something tastes sour or sweet. As we talk about it, I can learn to recognize and tell about the taste of a lot of foods and maybe find different things to eat that I like.

☐ . . . . . listen to kitchen sounds such as frying or stirring, and dishes and pans rattling. I can watch the steam rise as you boil water and feel how cold the ice is as I help you put it in the glasses.

I CAN

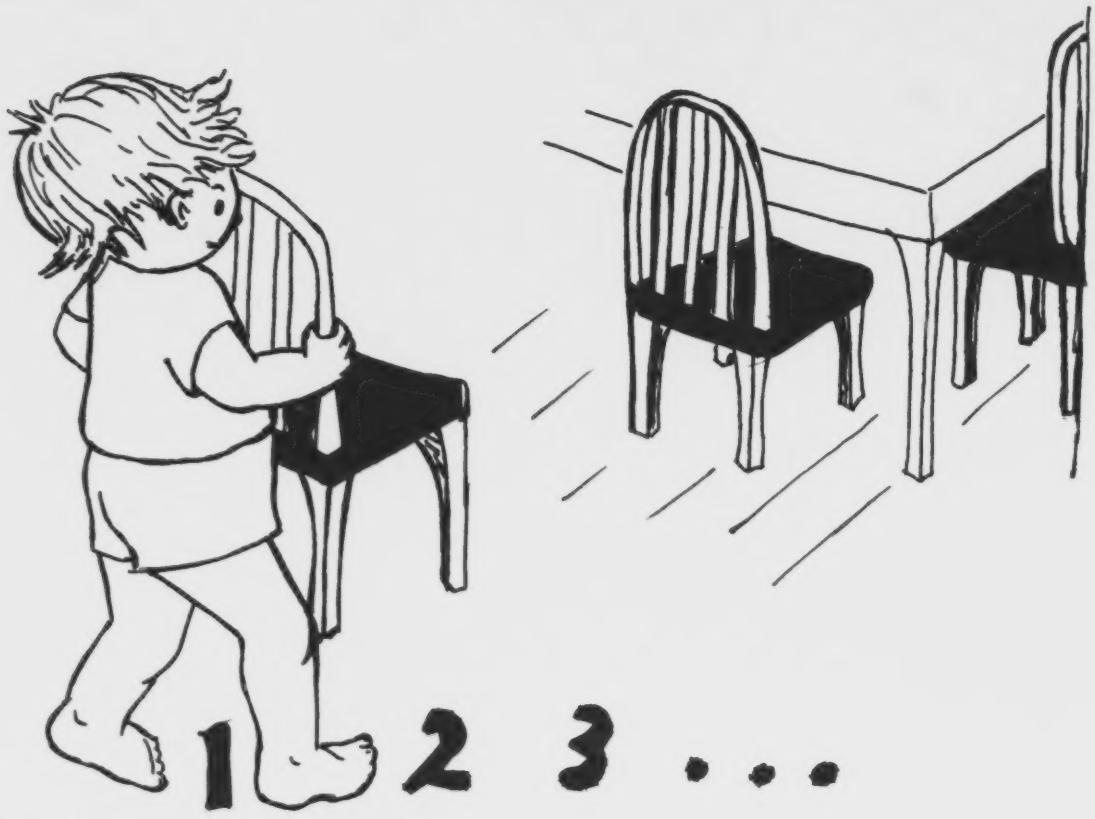
☐ . . . . . pour my own milk and juice and serve my own vegetables. In the beginning I need you to understand that I may spill something or take more than I will eat, but I can practice pouring over the sink or on a cabinet where spills won't matter too much. With your help I can soon learn to start with smaller servings.

☐ . . . . . unscrew the lid on the peanut butter or mayonnaise jar and spread some on my bread for a sandwich. Somehow, it tastes better when I can make it myself.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . wash and dry some of the dishes for you.

☐ . . . . . set the table and tell you about the round plates or the square dishes, big spoons, little spoons, tall glasses, short glasses, and things that go together like cup and saucer or knife and fork. I can start learning right and left too and tell you about it out loud as I move around the table.

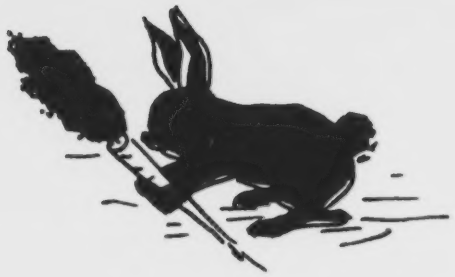


I CAN

☐ . . . . . tell you about how many chairs will be needed for my family to each have one at the table, and I can count the plates as I get one for each person. I can fold the napkins so they make a triangle or a rectangle and feel very good that I can really help you.

☐ . . . . . think of one also.

I CAN



☐ . . . . . be responsible for a pet. I need you to help me get the right food and home for it; then I can do the rest. Rules about my pet are important for me to know and understand before I get it.

☐ . . . . . grow a sweet potato in water or some seeds in a cup that I fill with dirt. You can help me decide on a place where they can get sunshine, and show me how to feed and water them.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . help you with the vacuuming, dusting, and window cleaning. Since I am small, I may sometimes need a little stool to stand on, but I can learn to balance myself very well with practice. It is fun to spray the windows and wipe the bubbles and dirt away and to make the furniture shine with some polish. I can learn to put the vacuum cleaner together; you can show me how to use it safely. I will usually get tired after a short time, but it makes me feel good to know I can help.

☐ . . . . . get the mail for you and talk about the pictures and the numbers on the stamps. I can tell you which envelopes are longer and heavier and count how many pieces of mail we get.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . learn to answer the phone correctly. I already know some things to say from listening to you; but I'll remember more when I practice myself. I can learn to recognize the numbers on the dial and to tell you my own phone number. When I know how to use the phone, I can call a friend or my grandparents. It will help me to practice on a toy or pretend phone first.

I CAN

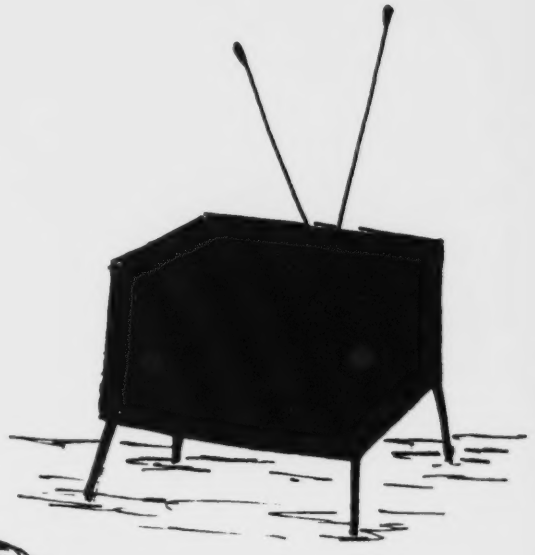
☐ . . . . . tell you the words and let you write a letter for me to a friend or grandparent. Then I can fold it, put it in an envelope, lick and seal it, and put the stamp on it myself. I can give it to the postman or drop it in a mail box when we go out. We can look on a map and find where the letter will go.

☐ . . . . . look at books and magazines and find things that are red or blue, and things that go together such as a stove and a frying pan. I can learn the names of things, and I can practice using scissors by cutting pictures from catalogs and magazines.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . tell you parts of a story that you have read to me. If you will start a sentence in the story, I can finish it. I can learn simple poems and rhymes by listening to you say them and by saying them with you.

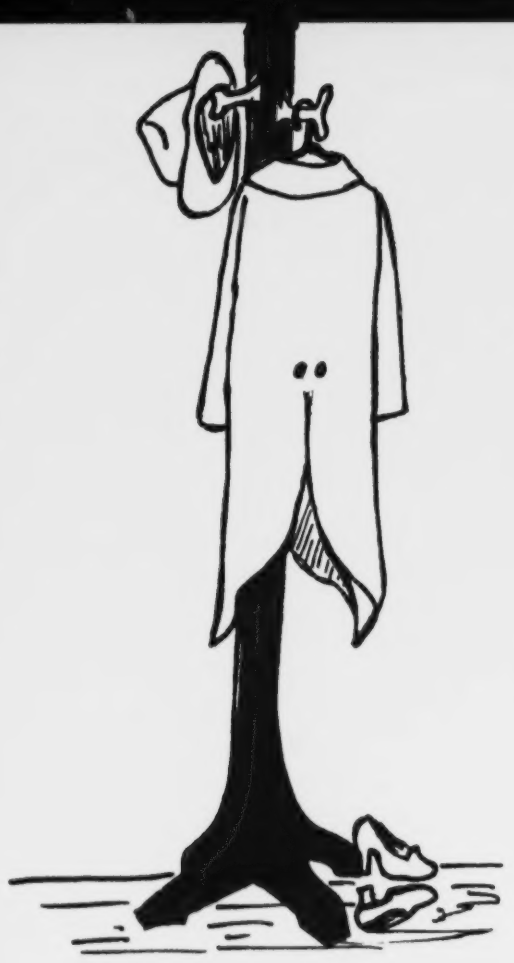
☐ . . . . . tell you about a program I have seen on T.V. I can remember the beginning, what happened in the middle, and the end. I need a listener, though, so I can talk about it while I set the table or help you around the house.



I CAN

☐. . . . .listen to outside sounds and inside sounds and play a guessing game with you. I can learn to tell you about soft sounds and loud sounds and to remember what is making the noise without looking at it.

☐. . . . . make a drum with a coffee can and a stick, or a rhythm instrument with a pie pan and an old spoon; then I can keep time with the music I hear on the radio or T.V. I don't need to bang on it very hard to get the right beat. I can move my feet or hands or body to keep time also, and I can sing along and even make up my own songs.



I CAN

☐ . . . . . dress up in old clothes, shoes and wigs and pretend to be another member of the family or a person I know - or sometimes I can even play I'm an animal I like. We can learn a lot about each other when I pretend to do the things you do.

☐ . . . . learn to share with friends and with brothers and sisters. It is not easy to share because some things are really special to me. I need you to help me decide on some good rules for sharing.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . build houses and stores and airports with blocks, shoe boxes, milk cartons or almost anything, and I can pretend to be whoever I like - I can be a storekeeper and sell things or a pilot and fly in and out of exciting places. Sometimes I may want to share my make-believe world with you, and sometimes it's nice to leave pretend worlds and know you can share other experiences with me.

☐ . . . . . put away my toys and games when I have finished playing with them. I need to know where they are supposed to stay, and I need to be able to reach the shelf or open the cabinet.

I CAN

☐..... tell you about things that happen to me and talk to you about things I like and things that make me sad. Sometimes I really will be mad, but you can help me find ways to show it without hurting anyone – like punching a fat balloon or blowing up and popping a bag or kicking a ball in the yard. I need to express my feelings, and I need you to listen and understand.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . enjoy sitting on soft chairs and fat cushions without bouncing on them. It is important for me to learn to respect the things in my home and elsewhere. I like myself better when I feel good about the way I act.

☐ . . . . . pick some flowers or pretty green branches and put them in a vase or glass to make the house look nice. I need to know which flowers and greenery are okay to pick so I don't spoil the pretty things outside either.

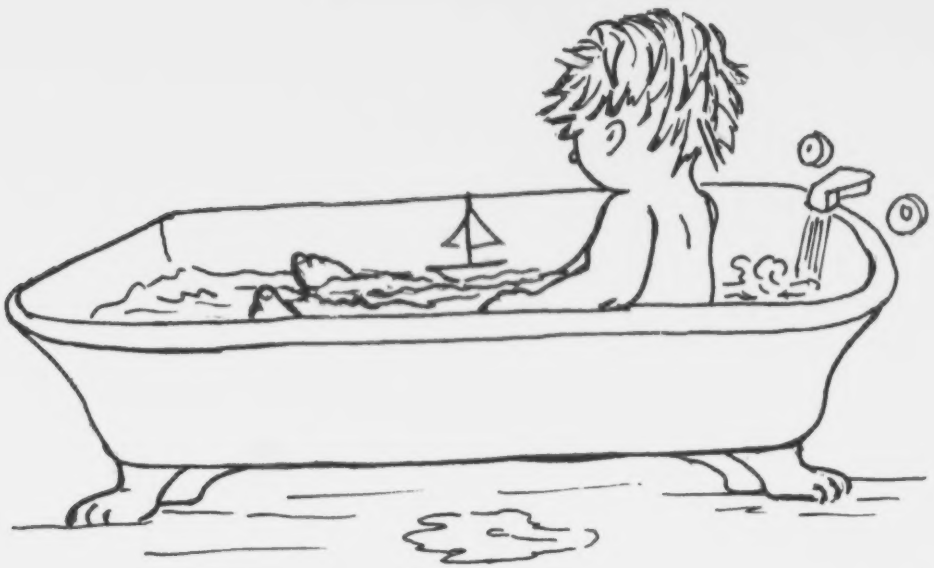
I CAN

☐ . . . . . learn to recognize the numbers on the scale as I weigh myself and on the yardstick as you help me measure myself. I can compare my size with other members of my family and use words like taller, biggest, heaviest and smallest.

☐ . . . . . look in the mirror and discover the color of my eyes and hair, and see how my teeth are growing and how I look when I smile or frown. It's fun to know alot about me and how I'm so special.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . bathe myself and watch the soap make bubbles as I squeeze my wash cloth or sponge. I will really enjoy my bath if I can sail a small boat or have a plastic cup I can use to pour water over myself.



☐ . . . . . brush my teeth myself. I will enjoy helping you choose my toothbrush and toothpaste. I can keep a little chart too that will help me to remember to brush often. I can do it, but sometimes I get so busy that I need to be reminded. It is important for me to form these good health habits while I am small.

☐ . . . . . think of other special ways I can take care of myself.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . dress myself. When I begin there are some things that will be hard for me. Buttons, zippers, buckles and hooks need practice, and tying a bow takes a long time to learn. Shoes sometimes want to go on the wrong feet, and socks stretch forever when I pull them on . . . I can understand back and front, up and down, pairs and colors and many other ideas. You will want to show me a lot of times, and we can talk while I learn.

☐ . . . . . think of another "I can do."

I CAN

☐ . . . . . help you make my bed and feel the smooth sheets, the soft pillows, and the rough spread. I can learn words like tuck, under, corner, tight, and flat. New words are fun for me, and I like to use them over and over.

☐ . . . . . put my clothes away and decide where each should go according to size, shape, or use. I need hooks and drawers that I can reach, and soon you will see that I am able to do most of these things alone, though I need your help at first.

OUTSIDE

☐ . . . . . hop over the cracks in the sidewalk, jump from one circle drawn on the ground to another and skip all around the yard. I can practice hopping on my left foot, then my right foot, and I can learn to use my body to keep a swing moving after I get it started.

☐ . . . . . catch and throw a ball and run to kick a ball too. A large ball that isn't too hard will be better for me to start off with. It really takes a lot of practice to do well. Older brothers and sisters need to be patient if they are helping me.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . count the cars, trucks, busses that go by for 15 minutes and tell you how many red ones or blue ones or any other colors. I can listen for airplanes and helicopters and count them too.

☐ . . . . . enjoy a big cardboard box. It can be a car or house or a hiding place for me. I can climb in and out of it and draw pictures on it. I can even slide or roll down a hill on it. Cardboard boxes are an endless source of fun and easy to find.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . find and bring you the tools you need when you are working on things around the house. It will take a little while to learn all the names, but soon I can hand you the long screwdriver, the biggest wrench, the heaviest hammer, or the smallest nails.

☐ . . . . . hammer some nails in an old board by myself if you will tell me which pieces of wood I can use and share a few nails with me. I can tell you about what I've made and how it works.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . collect leaves, acorns, rocks and other things in a bag or box, and then I can sort them out according to which ones go together. I can tell you about the colors and weight and size of these things when you have a few minutes to listen.

☐ . . . . . help you shell beans or peas and help you pick vegetables from the garden. It won't take long to learn which are ripe and which are not yet ready to eat.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . help you water plants and grass, and help you wash the car too. I can learn how to turn on the faucet and how to turn the hose nozzle so it mists or makes a heavy stream of water. On a hot day the water will be cool and exciting for me.

☐ . . . . . help you pull weeds from around the flowers or the vegetables. I need someone to help me know which are weeds, but we can do it together.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . recognize animals and insects that I may see such as squirrels, spiders, and ants. I need to know that some are friendly and some are not. I can talk about the long tail or how many legs they have, and I might draw a picture of something I have seen for you.

☐ . . . . . rake leaves and pick up sticks and put them in a wagon or large bag to take them away to a place you decide they need to be. Let me jump in a big pile of dry leaves before we carry them away.

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

I CAN

☐ . . . . . pick up paper and bottles and cans and put them in a big box for the trash man to carry away. Some of these things may have sharp edges, and I need to be careful. I can even wear a pair of old gloves so I won't cut myself, but I really enjoy doing grown-up things.

☐ . . . . . begin to learn safety rules. I can recognize signs that tell me what to do - such as "walk" and "don't walk" and the meaning of traffic lights. I can learn how to look both ways before I cross the street, and I can learn my address and phone number in case I need to know them.

I CAN

☐ . . . . . take a map of my town and mark where my house is and where my school is and where a lot of things I like are. I can learn a little bit about north and south and east and west though these are hard ideas for me to understand.

☐ . . . . . ride around with you and see the brick buildings, the frame houses, and discover that people live in different ways. I can see crowded houses and apartments, lone farms, and homes that are surrounded by trees and grass. I can learn many things about the whole community as we drive through it.

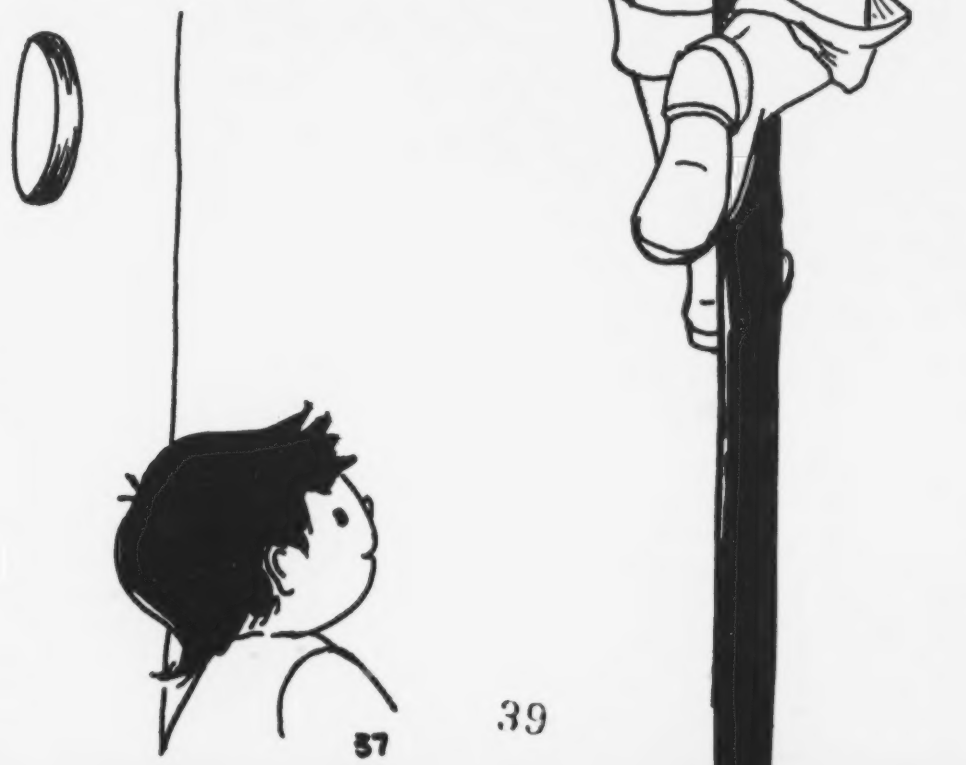
I CAN

☐ . . . . . find pictures in a magazine of houses, buildings, or helpers in my neighborhood and glue them on some heavy paper. Then I can cut them into puzzles that I can put back together. I can do that with a picture of me too.

☐ . . . . . visit the grocery store with you and learn the names of all the fruits and vegetables. We can talk about other things on the shelves, their colors, how they feel or taste, and what they do. We can also talk about how food gets to the store and all the people who grow and carry it.

I
CAN ☐..... go shopping with you and look in all the big stores and see the different things that are for sale. I can learn so much about color and shape and what things are for and how they work. Later I can cut out pictures of what I saw and make my own catalog.

☐..... visit the fire station and the museum. I can meet a policeman and other community helpers and find out what they do and why they are important. I can also learn some things about a hospital and who works there.



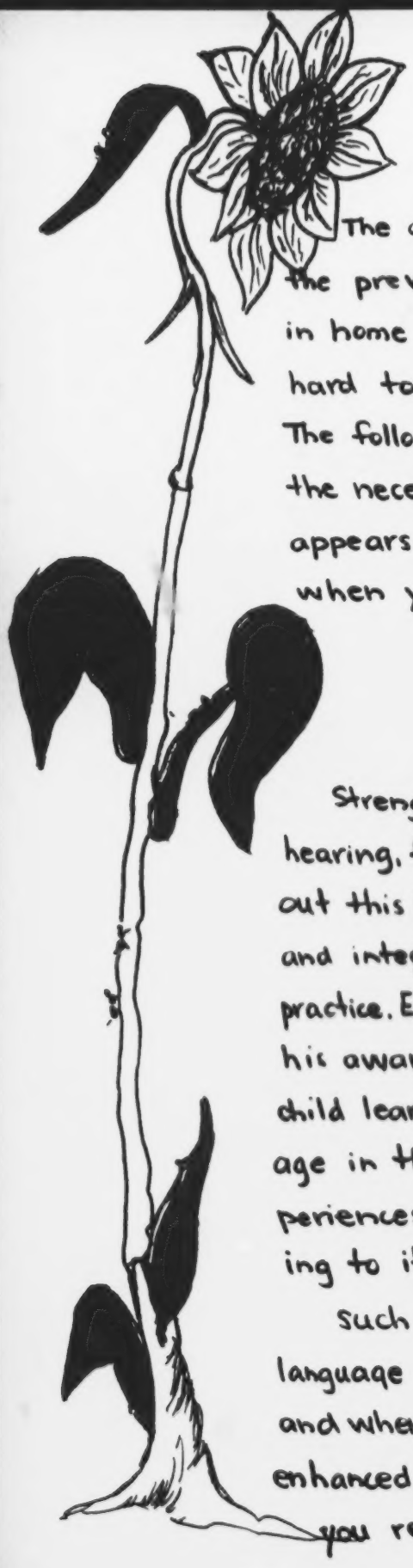
I CAN

☐ . . . . . visit the school I will go to and meet the principal and walk around the building so that it will not seem so strange to me.

☐ . . . . . watch the people I meet and learn from you what is expected of me when I go shopping, or visit your friends, or go in crowded places. I need to know these things so that I can feel good about myself and be sure what is expected of me as I grow and move out into the community.

☐ . . . . . enjoy the parks in my my community - I can sit in the cool shade under a tree or enjoy the warm sun while I swing or climb or just run. I can learn to share with other children who come to the park to play also.

☐ . . . . . ask for and pay for my own drink or popcorn. I can learn which coins are highest in value and which are least, and I can learn to be responsible for the money I'm allowed to spend when we go out. I need a button pocket or some safe place to keep my change.



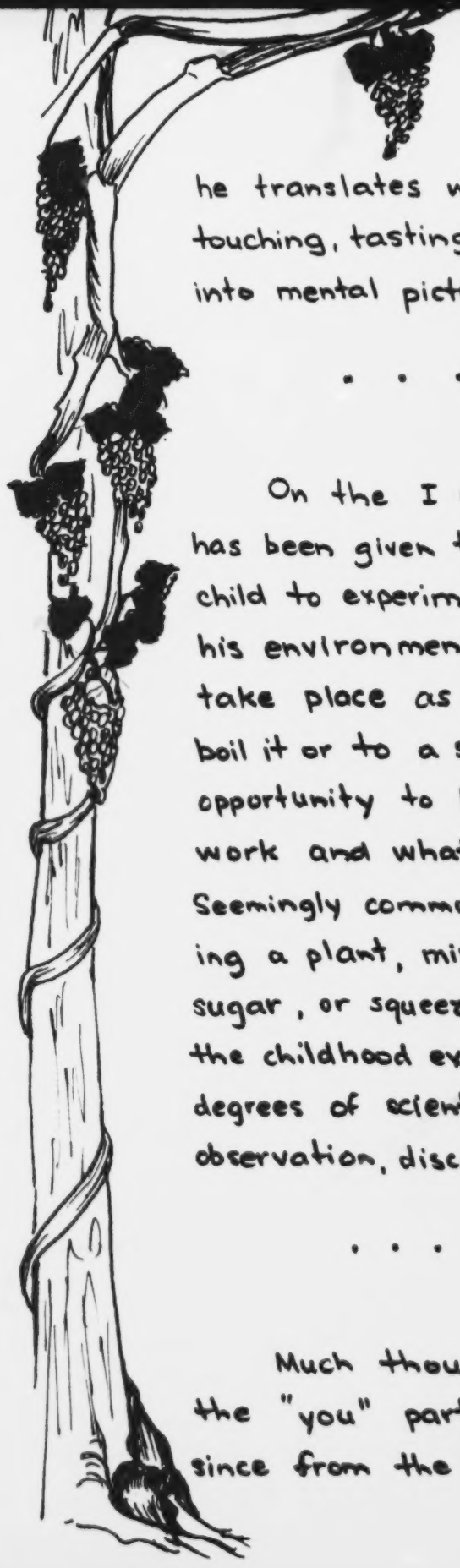
A WORD TO PARENTS . . .

The activities and conversations that are listed on the previous pages are some that evolve naturally in home and neighborhood situations and are often hard to recognize as important developmental skills. The following notes will help you recognize and review the necessary skills your child is learning from what appears to be play or may seem a lot of trouble when you are busy or in a hurry.

. . . . . .

Strengthening the use of the five senses (seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling) is stressed throughout this book. Developing the acuity of each of the senses and integrating the parts into a whole idea requires practice. Every experience the child can have will increase his awareness of things around him. For example, a child learns what bacon is not only by seeing the package in the store, but also through his many experiences with it - tasting it, smelling it, and listening to it while it sizzles on the stove.

Such experiences give meaning to language. Once language acquires special meaning, stories become exciting and when stories are exciting, the desire to read them is enhanced. When the child listens to the poems and stories you read him about soft kittens, ripe apples, or high fences



he translates what he has learned through touching, tasting, hearing, smelling and seeing into mental pictures drawn from past encounters.

. . . . . .

On the I CAN pages special consideration has been given to creating opportunities for the child to experiment with a variety of things in his environment. Watching the changes that take place as water turns to steam when you boil it or to a solid as it is frozen gives ample opportunity to become interested in how things work and what effect forces have on matter. Seemingly commonplace experiences such as growing a plant, mixing lemon juice with water and sugar, or squeezing soap through a sponge are the childhood experiments that initiate higher degrees of scientific reasoning and independent observation, discovery, and study.

. . . . . .

Much thought has also been given to the "you" part of the child's experiences since from the beginning he models his behavior

from the adults in his life. By observing reactions to mistakes and spills, by listening to adult conversations with family and friends, by seeing an acknowledgement of feelings or hurts, and by watching adults as they move about in and react to their community, the child develops his own patterns of living and acting. Recognition of his role in the family is developed largely through observation as is his concept of responsibility and social interaction.

. . . . . .

Social growth and development is a built-in feature as the child reacts to family, friends and others with whom he comes in contact. Again, development does not take place haphazardly but according to what is offered and what is perceived as the correct response. The more varied the experiences the more at ease the child will be in new situations (as school or kindergarten).

The ability to assume responsibility for self and environment is another part of the social growth that must take place, and

again, many of the activities listed in this book offer opportunities to develop these skills. Putting away clothing and wiping up spills are good beginnings as is waiting to take a turn or remembering safety rules. However simple a task may seem, if the child finds satisfaction and pride in doing it himself it is of particular significance. The response he receives for his efforts will reward him and encourage further independence.

. . . . . .

Conceptual growth develops naturally and readily as the child interacts with his environment. Both specific and general concepts are a fundamental part of this growth. Mental images of shoes and socks, bread and butter, and countless other things are formed by the child as he hears these words. These are specific concepts while broader categories as food and clothes would be more general concepts.

In addition, conceptual growth implies reasoning, organizing single thoughts into related ideas with special meanings and internalizing correct behavior patterns from specific experiences and observations.

Conceptual growth includes learning

letters and numbers and words and their relationships, but this begins with less academic tasks that are the roots from which such learning grows. Success in elementary tasks and play is fundamental to success in more advanced skills.

. . . . . .

In coordinating the development of the whole child, much attention has been given to acquiring and increasing physical skills. Skipping, hopping, swinging and jumping are just a few of the activities that are naturally entered into, but they are not always easily executed. In addition to all of the games and tasks that strengthen large muscles, there are many things a child can do to exercise fine motor skills.

Squeezing soap from a sponge, shelling peas and beans, and picking up small items from the table, floor, or ground require the use of many small muscles. Pouring, stirring, painting and coloring, and cutting not only increase motor skills, but

they accustom the eyes and hands to working together.

. . . . . .

It is intended that this book stress the total development of the child and emphasize the fact that "readiness for school" is not related solely to an ability to recite letters and numbers or to write words. It is also intended that the readers become acutely aware of the outstanding role that simple, everyday activities and discussions play in motivating the child to learn and in building the skills and concepts necessary to further his development.

A FINAL NOTE TO PARENTS

In helping your child do the kinds of things in this book, you will be sharing experiences with him which will help him to grow and learn. He can discover that some things are alike and that some things are different. He can learn about shapes, sizes, colors, textures, and tastes. He will develop concepts like hot and cold, wet and dry, full and empty, rough and smooth. He will also learn that he can do things for himself and, thus, he will feel good about himself. You can show him that he has someone who cares about him - someone who will help him and learn with him.

We hope that you will use these ideas as a starting point for you and your child to continue to learn together.

<u>You</u> can do it!

ABOUT PROJECT ENLIGHTENMENT . . . . .

The numbers of preschool children having emotional problems is alarming; yet, of all age groups, this is the one most neglected in the area of mental health services. What happens to the under-six child who has an emotional problem during this extremely vulnerable period in his life?

If he lives in Wake County, North Carolina, he may receive the services of Project Enlightenment, a mental health/educational program available exclusively for the three- through six-year-old child with emotional problems, his parents and teachers. Operating as a function of the Raleigh Public Schools, the project emphasizes preventative education, identification of children with emotional handicaps, and intervention before the problems compound and become more severe.

Beginning in 1969 as an ESEA Title III project, Project Enlightenment has now expanded to become a part of the total mental health services of the area and works in affiliation with the Wake County Mental Health Center and the Child Psychiatry Training Program of Dorothea Dix State Hospital. It is funded by the Raleigh Public Schools and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The main philosophy of the project is built around the idea of keeping children in the mainstream of the educational process, prevention of labeling children with problems, and training teachers and parents to recognize problems and develop techniques and skills in dealing with them. Major activities and services are outlined below.

- Program and child centered consultation to private and public, preschool and first gr. teachers
- On-the-job training for teachers
- Demonstration teaching
- Child-centered staffings
- A Demonstration Nursery School for both disturbed children and those without identified problems
- Series of credit training courses for teachers
- Clearing house for children with various problems
- Coordination of activities among numerous agencies serving young children
- Parent counseling
- On-going parent education groups
- Parent therapy groups
- Play therapy for children
- Development of REDI-4, a screening instrument for parents
- Psychological and psychiatric services
- Training and field placement center for university students
- Development of information record system
- Follow-through for children entering other programs.

Project Enlightenment is a recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award presented by the N.C. Department of Mental Health; it has been selected by NIMH as one of eight outstanding mental health programs in the country to be included in a book on services for young children. It has been presented at numerous professional meetings such as the Umstead series of Distinguished Lectures, the Dix Roundtable, the Southeastern Regional Meeting of AAPSC, and the National Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association.

A slide-tape program on the project is available for interested groups. Visitors are invited to come to the facilities and observe the Nursery School located at Myrtle Underwood Elementary School. For further information contact the project at the following address:

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